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Feeling 'out of place' – A psychosocial exploration of cultural (dis)orientation as an immigrant worker

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Presentation title: *Feeling 'out of place' – A psychosocial exploration of cultural (dis)orientation as an immigrant worker*

Abstract

What is it like to be an immigrant worker in a “hostile environment” in the UK? How does the form of discursive environment, which produces immigration as an issue of social epidemic, impact on an immigrant worker’s psychological experiencing of their cultural (dis)localities and subjectivity? In this presentation, I draw on my personal, psychoanalytically-informed voice to explore into these questions, by foregrounding the materiality of the hosting environment as the place in which the present relational matrix takes place, in which the internal dynamics of object relationships are lived in the present sense, and idiosyncratic expression of selfhood assumes forms.

The materialised reality of the place matters not least because it is drenched in power relations but also as it is where an immigrant worker seeks dwelling. The hostile host, in this sense, not only produces immigrants as its guests (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000), but also as unwelcome yet persistent guests to be yoked to their place of otherness and inferiority. By presenting vignettes of my encounters with the Home Office, I call into questions the existential conditions of the immigrant worker and the potentiality for object-relatedness on relational grounds problematically punctured by hostile rhetoric. Could an immigrant’s sense of locality ever be anything but, evoking Said (2013[1999]), “out of place”? To address this, I will explore into “out of place” as not simply an emotional, lived experience, but also a state of being that is embodied, psychically worked on, and strategically evoked in resisting power of the hostile host.

Key words:

Immigrant worker, psychosocial, hostile environment, out of place

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